

Message Text

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SUBJ: INDONESIA AND ICCS

REF: A. JAKARTA 13655 B. JAKARTA 13371 C. JAKARTA 11839

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING RECENT TRIP TO SOUTH VIETNAM, INDONESIAN DEFENSE DEPARTMENT INTELLIGENCE CHIEF MURDANI STATED HE SKEPTICAL ABOUT WISDOM OF CONTINUED INDONESIAN PARTICIPATION IN ICCS IN VIEW POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC COSTS FOR WHICH THERE NO APPARENT CORRESPONDING BENEFITS. MURDANI HAS BEEN ASKED TO DRAW UP FORMAL HAMKAM STUDY RE PROS AND CONS ICCS PARTICIPATION AND, TO THAT END, PLANS ANOTHER VISIT TO VIETNAM WITHIN MONTH. HIS OWN VIEWS AT THIS STAGE TEND STRONGLY TOWARD INDONESIAN WITHDRAWAL AND THIS COULD WELL BE RECOMMENDATION RESULTING FROM STUDY MURDANI UNDERTAKING. END SUMMARY

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1. OVER LUNCHEON WITH CHARGE, DATT AND POLCOUNS NOVEMBER 19,

INDONESIAN DEFENSE DEPARTMENT INTELLIGENCE CHIEF MAJOR GENERAL BENNY MURDANI GAVE RUNDOWN OF RECENT TWO-DAY VISIT TO VIETNAM (SAIGON, CANTHO) WHICH HE MADE IN COMPANY OF DEPUTY COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF ARMED FORCES GENERAL SURONO AND FONDEPT SEC GEN LTGEN ASHARI AND ASIA PACIFIC DIRECTORATE CHIEF BRIG GEN ADENAN (REFS A ANF B) AS PART OF TRIP WHICH INCLUDED JAPAN AND KOREA. MURDANI AND SURONO HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH VIETNAMESE OFFICERS (INCLUDING GENERAL QUANG WHO RECEIVED THEM AT AIRPORT), INDONESIAN ICCS CHIEF GENERAL SUHUD, DEPUTY SAMIL AND OTHERS IN INDONESIAN DELEGATION (ASHARI AND ADENANA HAD PARTIALLY DIFFERENT SCHEDULE), AND HAD OCCASION MEET WITH OFFICERS OF ICCS LIAISON UNIT AT EMBASSY.

2. MURDANI STATED THAT AS A RESULT OF HIS TRIP HE SKEPTICAL WHETHER IT IN INDONESIA'S CONTINUING INTEREST TO STAY IN ICCS. HE HAS BEEN ASKED TO DRAW UP HANKAM STUDY RE PROS AND CONS OF ICCS PARTICIPATION AND, FOR THIS PURPOSE, INTENDS RETURN TO VIETNAM FOR LONGER VISIT WITHIN THE MONTH.

3. IN MURDANI'S VIEW REASONS FOR WHICH INDONESIA JOINED ICCS NO LONGER ENTIRELY VALID, IF THEY EVER WERE. (MURDANI, WHO OUT OF COUNTRY WHEN INDONESIA JOINED ICCS, COMMENTED THAT HE HAS SO FAR BEEN UNABLE TO FIND OUT REASONS THAT GOI DECIDED TO JOIN ICCS AND SEEMED UNCERTAIN WHO HAD MADE DECISION, UNLESS IT DEPOSED GENERAL SUMITRO). FOR EXAMPLE, INSTEAD OF INDONESIA'S RECEIVING INTERNATIONAL CREDIT FOR WILLINGNESS TO SERVE IN LWMS, INDONESIA FINDS ITSELF INCREASINGLY "CORNERED" IN SENSE OF BEING ONLY MEMBER TO INSIST ON PROCEDURES, INTERTREATIES, ETC. WHICH WILL ENABLE ICCS TO DO JOB IT CREATED FOR. INDONESIA IS REGULARLY VILLIFIED FOR ITS POSITION BY COMMUNISTS AND GETS LITTLE IF ANY PRAISE OR RECOGNITION FROM NON-COMMUNIST ASIAN COUNTRIES OR INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY (READ NON-ALIGNED) MORE GENERALLY. HE EVEN SUGGESTED POSITION MIGHT BECOME SO UNCOMFORTABLE THAT GOI COULD BE FORCED OUT, WITH CONSEQUENT "LOSS OF FACE" WHICH DIFFICULT FOR ASIAN COUNTRY TO BEAR. IN THIS CONNECTION MURDANI STRESSED THAT IRAN

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APPEARS RATHER DISINTERESTED IN ICCS, TAKING A NEUTRAL STAND WHEN INDONESIA WOULD EXPECT COOPERATION TO FACE UP TO COMMUNIST SIDE, THUS CONTRIBUTING TO INDONESIA'S BEING "CORNERED." ANOTHER RATIONALE FOR INDONESIA'S PARTICIPATION-THAT OF BEING ABLE TO OBSERVE COMMUNISTS CLOSE AT HAND-IS EQUALLY DUBIOUS, SINCE INDONESIA COULD ACCOMPLISH SAME PURPOSE BY ASSIGNING INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS UNDER COVER TO WATCH SITUATION. FINALLY,

INDONESIA IS EXPENDING FUNDS AND OFFICERS' TIME (HE NOTED DISCIPLINE IN RANKS AT HOME SOMEWHAT WEAKENED SINCE SO MANY CAPABLE OFFICERS IN VIETNAM) WITH LITTLE TO SHOW FOR IT SINCE PARIS ACCORDS NOT BEING IMPLEMENTED.

4. CHARGE STATED IT IS US ASSESSMENT--AND THAT OF MANY OTHERS--THAT PRESENCE OF ICCS HAS SERVED VALUABLE PURPOSE OF HOLDING DOWN LEVEL OF COMMUNIST ACTIVITY IN SOUTH VIETNAM. WHEN ASKED WHETHER GOI HAS SIMILAR ASSESSMENT AND WHETHER THIS DOES NOT SERVE INDONESIAN INTERESTS, MURDANI AVOIDED DIRECT RESPONSE.

5. CHARGE ALSO SAID HE HOPED HANKAM, WHEN REVIEWING QUESTION OF ICCS PARTICIPATION, WOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT OTHERS--USG AND GVN--HAVE GREAT INTEREST IN CONTINUED ICCS AND THAT MATTER SHOULD NOT BE CONSIDERED/DECIDED WITHOUT THEIR INTERESTS IN MIND. MURDANI INDICATED HE UNDERSTOOD AND THAT FAVORS DISCUSSING MATTER WITH USG BEFORE ANY DECISION MADE. HE WENT ON, HOWEVER, TO SAY IT IS NOT CLEAR TO HIM NOR HIS COLLEAGUES WHAT IT IS USG WORKING TOWARD OR AIMING AT IN SOUTH VIETNAM--AND HE STRONGLY IMPLIED NEED FOR USG TO TAKE GOI INTO ITS CONFIDENCE ON THIS SCORE.

6. WHEN DISCUSSING IMPRESSION OF SOUTH VIETNAM, MURDANI REITERATED USUAL INDONESIAN VIEW THAT GVN PLACES TOO MUCH RELIANCE ON HEAVY WEAPONRY AND NOT ENOUGH ON TERRITORIAL WARFARE. HE CITED GENERAL SURONO AS LOOKING WITH DISFAVOR ON LARGE FLEET OF AIRCRAFT, STATING IT MADE MILITARY DEPENDENT AND LAZY AS OPPOSED TO COMMUNIST OPPONENT. MURDANI HIMSELF NOTED

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UNFAVORABLY COMMENT MADE TO HIM BY SENIOR VIETNAMESE THAT THERE ABOUT 50,000 VIET CONG IN CORPS I, COMMENTING IT UNTHINKABLE TO AN INDONESIAN THAT SO LITTLE BEING DONE ABOUT THIS.

7. COMMENT: WHILE MURDANI SPOKE ONLY FOR HIMSELF, THERE STRONG IMPLICATION THAT SURONO (AND ASHARI AND ADENAN) PROBABLY SHARED HIS VIEWS. HOWEVER, GIVEN IMPORTANCE OF MURDANI AND SURONO IN MILITARY HIERARCHY AND KNOWN PESSIMISTIC VIEWS OF INDONESIAN ICCS CHIEF SUHUD(REF C), THERE IS REAL POSSIBILITY THAT HANKAM STUDY MURDANI IS ABOUT TO UNDERTAKE WILL RESULT IN FORMAL HANKAM RECOMMENDATION THAT INDONESIA WITHDRAW FROM THE ICCS. FINAL DECISION WOULD, OF COURSE, REST WITH PRESIDENT SUHARTO.

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